

**FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND  
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT  
FOR:**

**THE LOS TRIGOS ACEQUIA REHABILITATION AND PIPELINE PROJECT IN  
SAN MIGUEL COUNTY, NEW MEXICO**



Prepared By:



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers®  
Albuquerque District**

November 20, 2006

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)**  
**LOS TRIGOS ACEQUIA REHABILITATION PROJECT**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), Albuquerque District, in cooperation with the State Engineer's Office of the State of New Mexico, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and the Los Trigos Acequia Association, are planning a project to rehabilitate the Los Trigos Acequia system.

The Los Trigos Acequia Diversion Dam, and associated ditch system is located along the Pecos River in San Miguel County, New Mexico (see project maps, figures 1 and 2). The diversion dam is approximately 6.5 miles south of the Interstate 25 bridge off of New Mexico State Highway 3 (see photo #1 in appendix C of the EA). The project area is located near the community of El Pueblo in San Miguel County, New Mexico, and is located on private land owned by members of the Acequia Association.

The proposed rehabilitation work on the Los Trigos Acequia would be conducted under section 1113 the Water Resources Development Act of 1986 (Public Law 99-662; 33 U.S.C. 2201 et. seq.), as amended. The Act authorizes the Acequia Rehabilitation Program for the restoration and rehabilitation of irrigation ditch systems (acequias) in New Mexico. The Los Trigos Acequia rehabilitation project also qualifies under section 215 of the Flood Control Act of 1968, Public Law 90-483, as amended. Section 215 provides that the secretary of the Army may enter into an agreement to credit or reimburse the costs of certain work accomplished by states or political subdivisions thereof, which later is incorporated into an authorized project. The Secretary of the Army, acting through the Chief of Engineers, and, when he determines it to be in the public interest, may enter into agreements providing for reimbursement to States or political subdivisions thereof for work to be performed by such non-Federal public bodies at water resources development projects authorized for construction under the Secretary of the Army and the supervision of the Chief of Engineers.

The Los Trigos Acequia provides irrigation water to agricultural producers on approximately 200 acres of land and its ditches have been in operation since the early 1800's. Because the Los Trigos Ditch is earthen, water losses occur from seepage through porous soils and holes in the bank. Runoff from steep slopes results in the acquisition of large boulders, which makes the ditch is susceptible to avulsions and periodic washouts.

The project would not change/affect water rights, or the amount of flows diverted from the Pecos River.

No fill material would be introduced into the Pecos River or other waters of the United States during or after construction of this project. There are no delineated wetlands associated with this project. Thus, the project complies with Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands. The proposed action is the rehabilitation/restoration of an existing irrigation structure. Therefore, the project is not subject to the provisions of Sections 404 and 401 of the Clean Water Act (CWA).

Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management) provides Federal guidance for activities within the floodplains of inland and coastal waters. The proposed activities would not adversely

affect stream hydrology, existing flow patterns, or increase flooding probabilities. No additional development or disturbance of the floodplain is likely to result from this project. Therefore, the proposed action complies with Executive Order 11988.

The Los Trigos Acequia is considered to be eligible for inclusion to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion (a) of 36 CFR 60.4. The proposed disturbances will be confined to two head-gates (tap-boxes), an undershot structure, and 1,264 feet of the acequia itself, which will be altered from an open earth ditch to a buried pipe. The two head-gates and the undershot structure are less than 50 years old, and do not contribute to the character of the acequia. The project has the potential to affect one historical element of the acequia, the "open ditch" design. However, the portion of the ditch to be piped is not easily visible, and does not contribute to the rural landscape. The proposed project will not affect other historic elements such as alignment and function, which contribute to the ditch's eligibility for the National Register. Based on this information, the Corps is of the opinion that there would be "No Adverse Effect to Historic Properties" by the proposed undertaking or on the historic and cultural resources of the region.

Two alternatives were considered in this EA to address problems of water delivery associated with the Los Trigos Community Ditch:


1) Alternative 1: No action – No work would be performed by the Corps to address the current problems associated with the existing Los Trigos Acequia System.

2) Alternative 2: Rebuilding the diversion head-gates and constructing a sediment/trash rack; replacing 1,264 feet of existing earthen ditch with 36-inch high density polyethylene pipe; and rebuilding an undershot structure on a large un-named arroyo.

Only short term negligible effects to land use, aesthetics, soils, air, noise, vegetation, and wildlife would occur during construction. No impacts would occur to land use (long-term), climate, wetlands, waters of the U.S., special status species, floodplains, socioeconomics, environmental justice or cultural resources. The project would benefit water quality in the Pecos River, soil stability along the ditch system, land use, and water resources. The proposed project would not result in any moderate or significant, short-term, long-term or cumulative adverse effects to biological or cultural resources. As required by the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, the Corps has made the ESA determination that the project "may affect, not likely to adversely affect" the bald eagle. There will be no effect to any other threatened or endangered species receiving protection under the ESA.

The planned action is being coordinated with Federal, State, and local government agencies with jurisdiction over the biological and cultural resources of the project area. Based upon factors discussed in detail in the following EA, the proposed action is recommended, and would have negligible effects on the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not anticipated for this project.

19 Dec 06  
Date

  
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